

## THE RAISING OF THE DEAD

### THE PAULINE DOCTRINE OF THE "GREAT WORK"

But for the persistence of perverse ideas upon the subject, it would be needless to assert that "the resurrection of (or from) the dead" implies neither the stimulation into conscious activity of a cast-off body of mortality, nor the readjustment of such a body to the ultra-physical part of us at some "last day." The expression implies, and solely so, the unfolding and re-rising of individual human consciousness until that consciousness gradually outgrows all its present inhibitions and illusions, and, with the ingarnered fruits of its experience, rejoins its source in Omniscience and remains continually fixed therein and united therewith; itself and its "Father" becoming one.

That a rising of that within us which now is as dead should be practicable implies a prior declension of something that once was active and living. The "fall" or severance of the soul from its source, and its consequent incarceration in "coats of skin" and physical conditions mercifully devised to prevent its still farther fall, have involved for each of us a death, or deadening, of the soul's powers of perception, will, understanding, and affection. In their place natural man employs but a substituted set of faculties which are relatively spurious, since they are but a travesty of those the use of which he has lost. A sensual distorted apprehension of images of Reality takes the place of direct perception of Reality itself; a self-will is generated which is unharmonised with the Cosmic Will; a slow-working logical intellect displaces the power of instant intuitional cognition; whilst desires which are of his flesh supplant the supreme faculty of love which, were it exercised, would immedi-

ately associate man with the Life-Giver for whose name love is the synonym. Yet whilst these substituted faculties are the badge of our captivity they are not only the pledges of the possibility of our reintegration; they are the very instruments by which, in the first instance, the way thereto is prepared; whilst, subsequently, by their surrender and introversion, or, to use religious metaphor, by their sacrifice in a mystical death and burial, the restoration of the larger faculties they now inhibit becomes automatically effected. It is thus, then, and after this manner only, that we need "look for the resurrection of the dead" and for the accomplishment in ourselves of the mystery implied in those words.

The process of the resurgence of the soul from the grave of the senses is complementary to, and the corrective of, the process of submergence which it has previously undergone. In the course of the latter process it has sunk from weakness to weakness until it has appeared in Nature, and the world of Nature has come to be reflected in it. At the nadir-point of its descent ensues a halt until such time as "the Prodigal" revolts against the husks and illusions of that state. Then commences the return journey, and with reawakening consciousness and faculties the soul goes on from strength to strength until it appears in Zion—and Zion too appears in it. The process therefore involves a complete revolution of consciousness; a translation thereof from a natural or dead state to a supra-sensual, quickened state.

It is proposed to examine here the stages and phenomena of psychological development occurring in the course of this reawakening and reascent as they are biblically portrayed, with special reference to St Paul's description thereof in the first Corinthian epistle, which will be surveyed from a standpoint and with the assistance of certain evidence that may be new to many readers.

In a great and glowing passage (1 Cor. xv.) the Apostle sets forth the entire doctrine of the transmutation of human personality from a natural to a divinised

condition ; further, he implies that that transmutation is capable of achievement by man whilst in the flesh. The debased, literalising, mystery-shorn Christianity of later centuries has completely misconstrued the purport of this passage, with the result that, when its true doctrine failed to be imparted by the official churches, it came to be pursued and put into practice by adepts of the mystical life who laboured after its fulfilment in extreme privacy, some of whose testimony upon the subject is preserved to us in the cryptic literature of Hermeticism and Spiritual Alchemy, and elsewhere. Especially has a false interpretation of the passage in question been fostered by its unfortunate incorporation into the Anglican Burial Service, for, save in so far as the demise of the body may be deemed a remote, shadowy analogy of the dying to the lower self involved in the transmutative process, the passage has no relevance whatever to physical dissolution. No one is more insistent than St Paul upon the importance of the present time and the opportunity afforded by existence in the physical state for the achievement of the Great Work, as the process has come to be called. " Now is the accepted time ; now the day of salvation "—for co-operating in the cosmic scheme for effecting human reintegration. If that work be not performed, or at least commenced, in this present life, how then ? it will be asked. The answer to this question will be found in some words in the second book of Esdras (ix. 1-13) ; they conclude by advising us not to be curious upon this head, but rather to enquire, as we propose to do here, " how those are to be restored whose the (present) world is and for whom it is created." For those who know not, or follow not, the doctrine, we may still hold with the moving sentiment of a modern mystic that " Love is more great than we can conceive and death is the keeper of unknown redemptions " ; but the prospect thus held forth in no way relieves us from our present obligations, and in fulfilling these we may discover the nature of the redemptions which await also those who die daily in another than a physical sense.

Swiftly and summarily St Paul sketches the conditions

in which man in his natural state is placed and indicates the path of fulfilment of his destiny—the sublimation of the natural consciousness by means of mystical death, and the eventual attainment of supra-natural consciousness in God. He is expounding the dual process of involution and evolution to which the spirit of man, under the generic name Adam, is subject. From his first-appointed Edenic state of incorruption, Adam is represented as having lapsed into our present plane of imperfect, corruptible nature over which he was to have ruled and the perfecting of which he was to have superintended, but by which, as the result of his lapse, he is now dominated. But, in accordance with Divine wisdom and prevision, the children of Adam, after undergoing upon the cross of death in this world an experiential process necessary to their refashioning into the lost Divine image, are eventually to be exalted upon the cross of life in the Paradise whence they originated, carrying their sublimated natures into God in whose spirit-substance they will all merge in unity and co-consciousness.

St Paul proceeds to propound that that portion of every individual which comes to birth and manifestation in the world of nature, and which he terms " the first Adam," is " of the earth, earthly " and is but " a living soul " ; as though (as in fact is the case) the spirit, or ray of divine life originally inbreathed into and associated with that soul, had, as the result and penalty of the fall, been temporarily dissevered and withheld from full conscious union with it. This " living soul "—stuff, then, or despiritualised " earth," upon appearing in the world of nature (where it becomes clothed in physical integuments of yet another kind of earth) is the *materia prima* of a great enterprise ; a sentient, conscious substance subjected for the time being to physical laws and conditions, but invested with capacity to transcend these, and, as its reward for so doing, to become re-united with its own temporarily withheld " quickening spirit "—the link which affiliates it with its Creator. By losing its elementary, natural life, it is to find its true, supra-natural life by regaining union with the

Divine ray—its own Higher Self—which throughout the period of severance has subsisted in concealment, “hid with Christ in God.” When this reunion of spirit with soul has become effected by the “upper springs” of spiritual consciousness descending permanently into the “nether springs” of the purified natural mentality—the two poles of personality being made one,—the human “earth” or “first Adam” becomes transformed into divinised “earth” or “the second Adam,” and man is then capable of being described as “a lord from heaven”—a Master, an Adept. The title “lord from heaven” is common to both Hebrew and Oriental doctrine upon this subject; it is used in precisely the same connection in the *Bhāgavād Gita* and other Vedic scriptures. Popular teaching wrongly attributes the title exclusively to the Christian Master; it is important to note that it applies to any perfected, divinised man; the terminal words of Gen. iv. 26 (A.V., marginal rendering) indicate the remote antiquity when regenerated men “began to be called by the name of the Lord,” and Philo-Judæus has much to say in confirmation of the point.

Finally, the Apostle formulates two questions: (1) How are the dead raised? and (2) With what bodies do they come? The terse, elliptical nature of his replies thereto betokens the fulness rather than the poverty of his knowledge. In common with all great exponents of mystical doctrine, he veils or withholds far more than he makes explicit, but, although confessedly writing to those who were babes in that doctrine, we may assume him to have been addressing educated, philosophic minds habituated to esoteric methods of expression and not calculated to interpret his words in the gross, literal sense of after ages and the superficial manner of even the modern theological mind.

Premising, then, once more that in respect of these questions all ideas of physical dissolution must be eliminated and that “the dead” in question are the spiritually unawakened living, we will proceed to consider what is implied in the Apostle’s answers thereto. If the answer to the first amounts but to a restatement

of the fact that the raising from the dead must be by the often described threefold mystic way—purgation, illumination, union,—it may be of interest and service to see it demonstrated by another method. That to the second—With what bodies?—involves considerations upon which treatises upon mystical religion are usually wholly silent. The first question involves a study in psychology, but of psychology as expressed by the particular method adopted by the illuminated writers of Scripture; the second involves one in metaphysics, which, likewise, are biblically taught in a manner that is little understood.

#### I. HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP?

When Saul of Tarsus learned at the feet of Gamaliel the secret oral doctrine of Jewry, some knowledge of which was and still is requisite for duly construing the Scriptures, among other lights of Kabbalism imparted to him there must have been two upon which was based the thought he subsequently expressed in the first Corinthian epistle, so patent therein are their influences to those familiar with that doctrine. The first of these is the mystical import and content of the name Adam; the other is the Sephirotic scheme of the “Tree of Life”—a chart or diagram of the process of cosmic and personal evolution according to Hebraic religio-philosophy, to be found in any handbook upon the Kabbala. We shall deal with both of these matters in their turn. But whilst profiting as we may from such lights as the Kabbala may yield, let it be understood that not even the esoteric oral doctrine that interprets the written word will avail anyone greatly unless he be himself illumined by that of which it is the type—the Word Himself teaching in the heart. May, therefore, that other Light draw near, and, as we commune and reason together upon this mystery of man’s redemption and destiny, talk with us by the way. So shall our hearts burn within us as He also opens to us the Scriptures. They run here very deeply.

The name Adam is related to have been divinely

bestowed upon man at the genesis of things. Now, says an old proverb, *Nomen est omen*; a name, and especially one bestowed as this was, is a significant omen, and not a merely fortuitous appellative. To a seer (as was the case with Boehme, Blake, and many others) a man's name is his present signature in the cosmic scheme; an infallible index of the measure of spirituality he has attained or may develop whilst sealed with that name. No matter what the language, every name has its particular symbolic import and stands in subtle relationship to the personality who bears it, giving evidence to a seer of that person's character and powers, his spiritual lucidity or opacity. Names are chords of sound to the inner ear, to which, as in music to the outer ear, they are grateful or harsh, major or minor, accordingly as their constituent letters or notes are arranged. To be well-signatured is a greater blessing than abundance of outward gear; as it is written, "A good name is better than ointment."

Many biblical names are related to have been bestowed or to have undergone modification in accordance with the spirituality, or the lack of it, of the person or place involved, and formerly nomenclature formed an important part of religious science, as is testified by the literature of all great nations of antiquity. In the oldest extant treatise upon names, the *Kratylos* of Plato, Socrates, alluding to traditions that even then were hoary, asserts "There is an ancient saying—Hard is the knowledge of God, but the knowledge of names is a great part of that knowledge"—a statement corroborated alike by Pythagoras, Laōtze, Philo, the Zoroastrian and Vedic scriptures, as well as by Origen and other Christian Fathers. The Mosaic writer records that in the archetypal world that preceded physical manifestation the forms of the sub-human creation were brought in review before Adam "to see what he would call them"; Adam's insight and intuitive efficiency being thereby subjected to a test that, moreover, proved satisfactory, for it is added that whatsoever he called those creatures "that was the name thereof" already in the Divine consciousness. The Koran states

that "God taught Adam the names of things and afterwards Adam taught them to the angels who much admired them." When the natural man Abram, moved thereto by the Spirit, set forth upon the great quest, his name, like his nature, became transvalued by the insertion into it of the aspirate letter, the symbol of the Holy Breath which had inspired him, and henceforth he is Abraham. A radical psychological change in Jacob, "the supplanter" of divine consciousness by human reason, causes him thereafter to be known as Israel—"a prince of God" in virtue of his having reattained supra-sensual consciousness. A man bearing the name Saul, of sinister import in Hebrew history, and implying gross ignorance of divine things, journeys towards Damascus according to the outward story—presently we shall see why, according to the inward one—when he too experiences a revolution of consciousness and ever afterwards is known as Paul, a latinised form of the Greek divine name Apollo, the Light-bringer; so swiftly may spiritual darkness be changed to light. Developing spiritual experience occultly transmutes alike the quality, colour, and sound (or name) of man's nature. Of regenerate souls it is written that "their sound has gone forth into all lands"—all planes of the universe re-echo their presence, and, though they utter not a word in the way of human speech, the very existence of these "sons of God" is described in the Book of Job as being a "shout of joy" in heaven. In "The Ancient Sage" Tennyson has recorded how he was wont to awaken magically his own transcendental consciousness and to pass into ecstasy merely by muttering, mantram-wise, his own name—

"The word that is the symbol of myself";

and to every contemplative there may come to be known that hidden and "new name" which, being a man's spiritual signature in God, is revealed only to him whose consciousness awakens in God, and which therefore, as the Apocalypse affirms, is and can be known to none save him who receives it and at such time as he receives

it. For that name is the seal of the divine union ; it is the name accorded to the Mason who has rebuilt the temple of his own personality after the plans and designs of the original order and thereupon hears the words of divine acceptance of his offering as spoken at the completion of Solomon's symbolic temple : " I have hallowed this house which *thou* hast built, to put *My* name there for ever ; Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually."

But now to consider humanity's corporate, generic name, Adam—the word that is the symbol of us all. In Hebrew the name of the paradisal Adam is represented by eight letters, or sound values—HAADAMAH. But if this word be shorn of its aspirates and vowel-points—the spiritual elements in the name,—just as man in becoming exparadised has, as we have said above, become despiritualised and dissevered from his Higher Self, which remains hidden in God until restored to him, then the name itself becomes correspondingly impoverished and we are left with but the three Hebrew consonants ADM, unanimated by any quickening vowel. This latter truncated form of the name, then, is that of man in the natural, unregenerate state in which he enters physical life as a " living soul," the " first Adam," to undergo the experience essential to constitute him a " quickening spirit," a " second Adam," a " lord from heaven." It is with the mystical purport of the abbreviated form of the name that we will deal for the moment ; the significance of its extended form will be shown later on.

The three letters in ADM are attributable to three pivotal events or personages in the scriptural *quasi*-history of the national Israel. And these in turn correspond with three essential, well-defined stages in the religious life of those who, in whatever age or land, constitute the perpetual Israel of God. They denote, in brief, the stages of purification, illumination, and divine union as illustrated and personified, thus :—

The A is attributed by the Kabbalistic tradition to Abraham. Appropriately the initial letter of the

alphabet denotes the entrance to the mystical path, for then the personal will itself becomes " the father of the faithful," since it perpetrates its first act of faith by resolutely turning its back upon " Ur of the Chaldees," the attractions of the life of the senses, and beats forth towards Reality—the Promised Land, " a land that I will show thee." " The verbal statements (says Philo, of the Abrahamic legend) are fabulous. It is in the allegory that we shall find the truth. The emigration of Abraham from Chaldea, if one is to be guided by the literal expression of Scripture, was performed by a wise man, but, if we look at the laws of allegory, by a soul devoted to virtue and busied in the search of God." Here, then, is the parable of the nomadic life of the soul at the outset of the quest. Amid the unsatisfying pasturage of external things it turns to its own centre—the kingdom within. At an imperative inward call from thence every Abraham sets forth just as he stands, taking his " family " and " gold and silver"—his whole unregenerate mental and moral make-up—with him. His flocks and herds, of which he has " great store," clean and unclean beasts alike—desires and qualities of mingled good and bad,—he drives *before* him ; such an one must needs have control over the senses and their affections—" cattle " which doubtless hitherto have driven *him*. Very early upon the path he, like the prototype, encounters " famine "—heart-hunger after righteousness and the bread of life,—and, passing through " Egypt," learns of the bondage of mind and aridity of spirit that are therein. But, to curtail the parable, to the prototype ultimately came the perception that circumcision to the desires of the terrestrial body implies the development of a celestial counterpart. " My covenant is *in* (or with) your flesh " is the promise of a great miracle not merely of mental and psychical, but of bodily, transmutation ; it bespeaks the possibility of man's building, whilst upon earth and in its flesh, a resurrection-body such as afterwards the Lord Jesus exhibited and St Paul expounded. We shall speak more later on of this phase of the Great Work of alchemy of which popular thought

and public doctrine know nothing, but of which St Paul assures those who do apprehend and strive to accomplish it that "their labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The second letter, D, relates in its historical and biblical aspect to that long-subsequent period when that which in Abraham began to stir and energise has at length brought the aspirant to a certain advanced, but intermediate, stage; he has achieved a measure of conquest over his lower nature and become established as a king thereof. It refers to David, who is described as having passed abruptly from the sheepfolds to a throne; and mystically, it alludes to every one who, having, like David, folded, controlled, and shepherded his grosser nature, is suddenly rewarded with a sense of kingship over it. The more unclean "cattle"—the grosser vices of the body—have now been subdued; only "sheep"—the cleaner elements of the animal nature—remain, and these it was that David was safeguarding when the mystical kingdom came to him.

The whole range of experience involved in the reduction of the lower self, and of the psychologic changes incident to the pursuit of a new ideal and life-motive, is exhibited in the symbolic story of the Hebrews' conquest of Canaan. We are shown the well-known initial difficulties of the project—the "Anakim," or terrifying but illusory obstacles besetting the mind of each venturer upon the path; but, these notwithstanding, does not every Joshua and Caleb who unfaintingly pursues it recognise how Eshcol-grapes and other choice fruits are brought forth from their own centre into the outer consciousness, forecasting the abundance of good things farther within "the land"? We are shown the conflicts with the malevolent people in possession—the settled habits and propensities of the sensual self. We are shown their extirpation, the reduction of their "cities fenced with high walls, gates and bars, besides unwalled towns a great many"—strongholds of personal affections and weaknesses, and self-willed predilections of less or greater resisting-power; but is there not also portrayed, along with these, the inevitable expansion of consciousness that ensues as, with every step of self-

conquest, the powers of the soul are freed from their bondage and "the Lord enlarges our borders"? The stressful process being gradual and painful, the strain of asceticism is to be tempered according to our bodily capacity. "Apply a gentle heat at first (say the Alchemists) lest thou break the vessel and lose all"; and so of these initial efforts and difficulties we find it said "Thou shalt not be affrighted at them; the Lord thy God is among (within) you and will put out those nations before thee little by little; thou mayest not consume them at once lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee (*i.e.* lest the natural organism succumb to too sudden and drastic a change). The Lord humbles thee to prove thee, to know what is in thine heart, and to do thee good at thy latter end."

Graphic examples are given of our proneness to linger in some pet prejudice, or to retain our hold of some cherished affection or form of self-gratification. Earlier in the story Lot had pleaded pathetically for "the little city Zoar"; "and it is a little one" we, too, say of such or such a citadel of desire that we surrender so reluctantly when its razing is essential to the great end in view. But, like that little city, spared though it be for a while as a concession to our weakness, ultimately the order comes, "Escape for thy life; get thee to the mountain!" and the merciless-merciful Hound of Heaven pursues us up the spiritual heights. A second time perhaps we escape less easily. Perhaps, like Saul, we neglect to exterminate all the Amalekite cattle, and, picking and choosing for ourselves, preserve the best of them. We imagine we have sufficiently cleansed the Augean stable of the lower nature. In our pride of conscious spiritual growth we clamour, like the Hebrew people to Samuel, "Give us a king!"—but in another tone from that in which later we learn to murmur "Thy kingdom come!"—and we fancy that already the crown is upon our brow. Then falls some sudden unforeseen blow, or a grievous lapse from the ideal occurs, or the press and pinch of stealthily gathered circumstance constrain us to cry out at unmerited misfortune. But the only answer that comes to such complaints is that oracle which still rings

down the corridors of the mind, and which we learn to apply to ourselves—"What meaneth this bleating of the sheep; this lowing of the oxen?"—and we discern that as yet our lower nature is not yet dead enough; we have slain but our thousands. Our kingdom is taken away to be restored only when we have slain our ten thousands. How the mighty still fall in that "place of overthrow of the mind's pride"—the mountain of Gilboa!

At length, strength becoming perfected out of weakness, and interior riches increased by interior poverty, there comes the assurance of a real dominance over the sense-nature; a consciousness of sure kingship over so much of the inward "holy land" as has thus become painfully won. The grosser self being subjugated, it is now the period of trial and purification for the mental and emotional nature; the mid-epoch of spiritual growth, that of illumination and the "early rain." The name David, which covers this state, implies "the well-beloved son," the aspirant in whom already God is pleased, and etymologically is related to the Sanskrit *deva*, a bright, or illuminated, one.

Notoriously this state is one of violent emotional alternation; of rhapsody and exultation, as of one who has climbed from the valley and has left for ever beneath him the five burnt-up "cities of the plain"—the five gross senses—and is full of joy-songs in consequence; but nevertheless one chequered by grievous lapses from the path and false turnings from the ideal; by illicit amours of the mind—from which, after heart-wracking contrition, wisdom may still issue, as Solomon issued from David and exceeded his father in glory; by periods of appalling depression, by penitential and *de profundis* psalms. Students of the Kabbala will know that the letter which is both the initial and terminal in the name David is one of the Hebrew "double letters"; one, that is, involving contrast and oscillation between two opposed states. Folly and wisdom, weakness and strength, joy and shame, war and peace, aridity and illumination,—these were the portion of the biblical, as they are of every mystical David, whose psychological

life at this stage is one of alternation between the opposite shores by which the fluidic mind of man is bounded. The Psalmist himself has well described those who enter this state: "They reel to and fro and stagger as a drunken man, and are at their wits' end; until He bringeth them to their desired haven." The task imposed at this juncture, then, is the attainment of mental and emotional equilibrium, involving detachment from all idols of the false imagination and the establishment in the mind of that stable, serene wisdom which, as personified in David's great son, asks for neither outward nor inward riches nor "length of days" (*i.e.* continuous mental illumination) since it has learned to realise God as present equally in the poverty and darkness, as in the light and exaltation, of the mind. The Psalms of David are a text-book intended as specially illustrative of this stage of the path. They are an unique record of the fluctuating emotions and perceptions there experienced. The entirely irrelevant question of their authorship disappears in the recognition of the fact that they are less the utterances of an individual than an anthology expressing the experiences common to every soul as it passes through the phase of mental and emotional discipline typified by the symbolic life of David.

The final stage, covered by the letter M, and the one that in the process of psychologic unfolding the two former inevitably precede, as purgation and illumination precede the divine union, is that to which is attributed, alike in the historic sense and in mystical experience, the advent of Messias, "which is called Christ."

The events and records filling the biblical time-interval which elapses between David and the Incarnation are (so marvellous is the scheme of the sacred writings) a faithful symbolic portrayal of the psychologic states undergone by all who at length come to experience the birth of the Christ within them. We have seen how, through dying to, and becoming detached from, the claims of the senses, the soul becomes released from its outermost "Egyptian" bondage, a release which makes feasible a certain kingship and enlightenment of

the mind. But the mind is not the sanctuary in which the Kingdom of Heaven is fully revealed ; it is still but an outer court, although one into which are projected, from the depths within, the auroral streamers that proclaim the nearness of that Kingdom. The kingship of the mind, then, must be taken away ; it too must depart into captivity, its temple be destroyed, its altars demolished, its sacred vessels ravished. The "high places" or exultant energies of the mind must be laid low that the "valleys"—the soul-deeps—may be exalted. Sweet must become equilibrated with bitter, and bitter be realised as one with sweet. The conscious states typified by the pleasant "rivers of Israel" must be exchanged for those described as the "waters of Babylon" ere our interior "earth" can be filled with the knowledge and glory of a King whose presence is alike in the seeming good and seeming evil. By the purely natural process of the illuminated mind's own fatigue, by its own reaction from its exaltations, is brought about the opposite experience of acute misery and depression in which it "remembers Zion" and recalls the joy of "the Lord's song." But its lamentations, these dirges of the soul "in a strange land," are heard by the ulterior indwelling spirit of the soul. Its release is at hand, ordained by whom but by Cyrus the King ?—that is to say, *Kurios*, the self-same Lord within, who under a purposely veiled name, for His hour of manifesting is not yet, emancipates the mind from its captivity as previously He did when, as Joshua, He led the way out of the desert of the senses into the land of promise. But, attending that restoration, there are experienced those fulminations from within, denouncing the iniquities and instabilities of the mind of which the great seers of Israel wrote, mingled withal with major and minor prophetic intimations of the glory yet to be revealed. And thus it is that He, the divine spiritual Ego that affiliates us with God, who first granted the "early rain" of mental illuminating, when the "dew of Hermon" gently descended into the awakening consciousness, now causes the "latter rain" to fall and bids "the clouds drop down their fatness" into the soul. His spirit is poured

out upon all the soul's flesh ; the glory of the Lord is revealed in it ; every "eye"—every perceptive faculty of the soul—sees it ; even the bodily nature—"they also which pierced Him"—participates in the experience.

Herein is a great marvel. That concealed energy which, ever expanding from within, has hitherto made its presence known and felt in us with power, becomes first manifested in our consciousness in utter weakness, simplicity, and poverty. The Christ-babe issues from the kingdom within ; the eyes of the soul behold and worship Him ; the "kings of the east"—our spiritual potencies—bring and consecrate to Him all their gifts. Christ—the state of mystical consciousness that is so described—when born, is ever "Son of David," because He is always the issue of that prior psychological state associated with the name of David. "This day," and in all places, He is being born in the "city of David," for that city is each human heart that can permit His nativity to take place there. And knowing the nature of our corrupted frames, even as cleansed and chastened to the utmost, we know that, being born therein, the birth occurs in a stable, amid "beasts" and sensual affections that there are stalled, tamed and docile though they be. There is no room for Him in the "inn"—that busy hostelry, the mind,—public as it is to every chance-calling thought and the welcomer of every sense-impress from without. No ; His birthplace is elsewhere. He issues, more softly than a rose unfolds, from the centre ; from the womb of the virginised soul. He is seen at the parting of our veils. He is known in the breaking of our "bread," as, in our sufferings, His manipulating hands are felt subtly shaping the substance of our being and kneading it into food for God, whose bread we are to be, as He now is ours. Yet now He is seen laid in a manger,—a place whence our "beasts," our own lower nature, may feed. He is the seed sown from the beginning in this fallen Adam-earth of ours. He sprouts in it as Abraham : He flowers in it as David ; He fruits in it as Christ. He is the ultimation of our evolving consciousness ; the inevitable kindly fruit which

our primal Adamic earth-nature brings forth in due season. "Be patient, therefore, Brethren, unto the coming (within you) of Christ. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. So be *ye* patient. Stablish your *hearts*; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

I have called the Christ-state the ultimation of our evolving consciousness. The remark needs qualifying. Though we rise so far from the dead that we realise an expansion from within the soul of so gracious and transformative a character that it is called "a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord," since, unless wilfully rejected, the memory of the experience saves those who have known it from relapsing into the old sinful self, what has occurred is, after all, but a birth. True, a rebirth, the beginning of a higher order of consciousness in the light of which all things are made new; but, being but a birth and a beginning, must it not proceed to a death and an ending, even as the Lord Christ died? It is a fruit, but must not fruit grow, ripen, and wither to decay? So then, the Christ-state in us must advance in orderly development of realised experience and come to a close of its own before that final stage when God becomes all in all. The term of aspiration, says St Paul, is not merely to "know Christ" as an initial experience, but to press on until we know "Him crucified," by appropriating in our consciousness all that is implied by His death and burial. The Christ-state must grow in us in wisdom and stature, must fast, be tested, afflicted, must minister to others and show its powers, must endure the "abomination of desolation" of Gethsemane-garden—for all the biblical gardens, Eden, Gethsemane, and that of the resurrection-scene, denote places of spiritual growth,—and, lastly, be crucified, dead, and buried. But this last supreme renunciation or crucifixion of the blissful Christ-consciousness, of which all prior mortifications of body and mind are but preparatory experiences, will be that "death upon the summits" which some of the greater mystics have described. It will and can only take place in that Calvary which is the bald (*calvus*) naked height

of the human mind, and in that Golgotha which is called "the place of a skull" because the event is experienced in the seat of our intelligence, the human brain. But, after this supreme mystical death, it is written that the Christ-consciousness dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over it; and that thenceforth it liveth unto God in perpetual union, having attained its final resurrection and ascension. Thus the mystical progress which has involved in turn a dying to the sensations of the body, and a dying to the enjoyments of the mind, involves finally a dying to the consciousness of the soul. The "son of man"—the fruit of all that is truly rational in man—must be crucified and die in us before he becomes "Son of God"; the Christ-consciousness must disappear in a last bewildering chaos before the last wonder of all occurs. "It is expedient that *I* go away. If I go not away the Comforter cannot come. If I go away I will send *Him* unto you"; and *He* is the soul's attainment in all transcendence—the Holy Breath which at last permanently unites with and indraws into itself that which it once outbreathed.

The fact of the Christ-life being a sequence of realisations to be experienced separately from and independently of those prior sequences which affect in turn our sensual and mental parts is one that well-nigh universally escapes perception. With pitiable perversity popular thought and public doctrine have confused the Gospel-pageant of the life in Christ with the processes characterising lower levels of religious progress. That pageant displays the particular, terminal portion of the path which lies at the heights of the spiritual life; it is not a map of the portion being trodden by those still at the base, or only upon the lower spurs, of the mystical mountain. It was intended only for adepts who had subjugated their physical and psychical natures; not for those amongst whom it has come to be exhibited indiscriminately as a rule for general mundane conduct and even as a sociological ideal, who are still babes and neophytes and have not yet passed through the elementary grades of spiritual consciousness. Not without reason was the Bible upon

this account formerly withheld from general publicity, by which humanity has undoubtedly benefited, but at the cost of lamentable confusion as to the book's true purport.

Those whose inward growth has attained what has here been called the Davidic state can recall a definite point or milestone upon their path at which they realised not merely a moral change, but the opening up of a new quality and fuller volume of consciousness; a point at which they can compare their old self and its perceptive power with their new, and can reflect how insentient and limited were the former in contrast with the latter: a point at which they can say with the Psalmist "Our feet (or lower consciousness) stand within (and not, as hitherto, without) thy gates, O Jerusalem!" A specific reference to this point is one of the instances in the Corinthian epistle in which, as was said earlier, St Paul enunciates a point of Kabbalistic doctrine. In the Sephirotic Tree, or diagram of the progression of consciousness, is a point named *Netzach*, Victory, indicating the reaching of an important, well-defined, psychologic state. It represents fairly high ground from which the mind can look down upon what it has now transcended, and up to a still greater height called *Tiphereth*, of which one of the Hermetists long ago wrote in Latin that "whosoever is united with *Tiphereth* shall prosper, even all his onward-going"; for *Tiphereth* is the Hebrew equivalent for the Christ-state. I would that what is here written might sound as a word of power that should raise from the dead the darkened understandings of those who conceive only of a coffin and a cemetery when they read the triumphant words, in which the Apostle quotes from the earlier seers of his race, "Death is swallowed up in Victory. Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?" The death here spoken of is not that of the body; it is that unvivified state of soul from which he who has reached *Netzach* upon the "Tree of Life" knows beyond argument that he has for ever risen, and that his former deadness is now assumed and swallowed up in the victory he has won over his lower nature. And the "grave" is that living tomb of the

soul, the physical body,<sup>1</sup> from the lusts of which he is thenceforth detached although destined still to dwell in it. He only who attains that detachment knows in what sense the serpent-sting of deadness has been bruised in him; and he alone can exclaim from the heart:—"Thanks be to God who giveth us victory in *Netzach*, through the unfolding power of the Christ within!"

But the mortification of the lower nature being thus rewarded, it remains to speak of the reward attending that more poignant death—the renunciation of the blessed life experienced in Christ. It is upon the occasion of this final mystical death that the hitherto withheld Spirit, or Higher Self, which has been hidden with Christ in God, leaps to rejoin the soul from which it has so long been divorced. To use Hermetic language, the "Fire of the North" (the transcendent consciousness of the spirit) mingles with the "Waters of the South" (the lower personal consciousness) in that supreme experience scripturally called the "baptism of fire" or spirit, with which the Baptist with water said the Lord would come baptizing. Twice St Paul vividly describes the experience; but who comprehends his burning words? The great, ultimate transmutation, he says, comes suddenly; "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall awake incorruptible"—beyond the possibility of further separateness or inhibition of consciousness from God. Elsewhere he writes that "the Lord"—the spiritual Ego—descends from heaven, the higher region of personality, "with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and the sound of a trumpet." He is employing traditional sacred imagery to describe the interior cataclysm that occurs when the stubborn Jericho-walls of the separated self ultimately collapse at the voice, ringing like a trumpet-blast through all the gates and alleys of our being, of that angel in us who always beholds the face of the Father, and who now, at this "last day," this final rending of our veils, comes to claim from the grave of the body the soul-mate

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John xix. 42: "Now the sepulchre was nigh at hand." One need not look outside oneself for it.

for whom he has so long waited and union with whom he has so ardently desired. "And so shall we be ever with the Lord"; in unbroken, conscious union.

Another description of this great mystical experience occurs in the Apocalypse. St John speaks of it when saying he was in the spirit on (or, more properly, in) "the Lord's day"; in conscious union, that is, with his own divine Higher Self. Literalists, unknowing that "day" is the biblical figure uniformly used to denote a state of inward light, imagine the allusion to be to a day of the week—Sunday. For its true sense, as understood by Christian initiates, they may refer to some words of St Ignatius, a disciple of St John, who in his Epistle to the Magnesians speaks of "no longer observing Sabbaths, but fashioning our lives after the Lord's day, in which our life also arose through Him and through His death, which some men deny; a mystery whereby we attained unto belief."

We have now traced in the light of Kabbalistic doctrine, the succession of conscious states to which the name Adam, when mystically analysed, testifies. We have seen how, in the biblical psychologic scheme, the Christ-state is always generated out of the David-state, which in turn is developed out of the Abrahamic. This sequence of mystical development we find definitely announced in the forefront of the first Gospel, which is described as "The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." That the phrase may be construed from a standpoint which, allowing for ellipses, may be called historical, may be admitted; but I am not now writing history; it suffices to indicate how the New Testament itself commences by laying down the successive psychologic states through which religious experience advances.

And now, to summarise all, we can exhibit the mystical content of the name in its extended form by which Adam and his posterity were originally, and still are, signated in God. Below is the title in its full form, HAADAMAH, so displayed that each letter is given its esoteric significance and denotes a stage of the soul's progress in consciousness as testified in

universal mystical experience and as taught by the Sephirothic diagram upon which the oral doctrine of Jewry was based. The name, it will be observed, is one of eight letters, for although seven is the perfect number in nature, eight is that of nature when it regains perfectedness in the Creator of nature. And as the seven notes of a musical scale lack something until they come to rest in the octave, so the seven days of the soul's creation are incomplete until they, too, attain their octave and we enter into the rest that remains for the people of God. "Give a portion to seven and also to eight," says The Preacher, who is Himself the Word preached, and who—such is the Divine modesty and playfulness—directs man to attribute to his own efforts seven parts of the Great Work and but one to the Great Worker who, after all, has performed all.

1. H. The breath-letter, denoting the spirit ray first breathed into man from the divine "Kingdom" (*Malkuth*).
2. A. The "living soul"-stuff or "earth" of Adam; the vehicle of the inbreathed spirit and forming the "Foundation" (*Yesod*) of the subsequent development.
3. A. The "first Adam," fallen, but in the Abrahamic state of revolt against the fallen condition and advancing towards "Glory" (*Hod*).
4. D. The Davidic state of enlightened mentality which attains "Victory" (*Netzach*) over the mind's deadness and the "grave" or outer body of mortality.
5. A. The point of transition and rebirth, or place of crossing from unspiritual to spiritual consciousness, signified by the crosswise Hebrew letter *Aleph*; and being the portal to further progress. (Boehme's Fourth Form of Nature.)
6. M. The Messias state, "which is called Christ," where the reborn soul sees its King in His "Beauty" (*Tiphereth*).
7. A. The "second Adam"; the perfected soul, restored and presented for divine approval

or " Judgment " (*Geburah*) ; for " after (mystical) death the judgment " (*Krisis*, or crossing over), Heb. ix. 27.

8. H. The last stage, when all the foregoing are in-drawn into the divine " Magnificence " (*Chesed*) in a " Sabbath," " Holy Convocation," or, as we should say, synthesis.

From the above table, then, we perceive how

" That which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home."

The seed or " Kingdom " is implanted in man at the first stage of his career. At the eighth and last stage that " Kingdom " (and here St Paul again directly alludes to the Sephirothic scheme) is delivered to the Father that God may be all in all. Ever and ever upwards that seed presses its way through the " earth " —the primal soul-stuff ; not the outer earth of mortality which is but its vesture and " has no part in the Kingdom " ; it flowers ; it fruits ; finally it seeds back into God who gave it. We accelerate its emergence into our consciousness, or retard its appearance there, accordingly as we say, or neglect to say, from the heart —" Thy Kingdom come ! "

In recent years the phenomena of religious experience have been classified, and the path of the mystic life has been described, by many skilful hands and to the profit of many seekers ; a work surely numbered among the many means of grace by which the Superintendent of our salvation is guiding souls to their true term. But of all the analyses of that life, of all the guide-books to the way at our disposal, there is surely none that maps the path with more certain discrimination and greater accuracy of touch than the ancient mass of hieroglyphy we call the Bible. And because its methods and language are those of hieroglyphy and not those of the common mouth and the modern press ; because its truths are expressed in terms of subtle, ever-varying, but always consistent, imagery needing a special method of interpretation ; and because its terminology, itself

the product of the illuminated mind, is as a cloud which to the intellects of Egypt appears as darkness but to the perception of Israel as shining light, it comes about that its purport is at once so habitually and woefully misconstrued, and yet remains so perennially true. To it, although other writings may indeed help to cleanse our eyes and prepare our minds, we turn at last, and there we find—not ancient history, which can profit little—but the story of ourselves as we to-day pursue the path of the Great Quest. It unfolds to us the pageant of the psychologic states we pass through as we become gradually raised from our dead selves into the life that knows no shadow of death. In actual experience doubtless these states are to some extent interwoven, telescoped, as it were, into one another, and, in a measure, work themselves out concurrently rather than separately. But whilst humanity exists they will still remain the stages through which each soul passes upon its return to God. Our Abrahams still flee from Chaldea towards a land of great promise. They still drive their flocks and herds before them when they subjugate that portion of their nature which God has ordained them to share with the brutes ; they still look for a great transmutation of mind and body, believing that eventually " the Lord (within them) will save both man and beast " —their own rational and irrational parts. There are still those amongst us, who in nourishing their inner life, are " tending the sheepfolds " ; and, as they ponder the stories of the saints and aspire to emulate the holy examples of the great mystical masters, are, like David, " following the ewes great with young ones," awaiting the time when they too shall be called to a kingdom. And still " shepherds " are sitting in " the field " —our world of nature—watching their inward flocks of desires and propensities " by night," in the darkness of the unillumined mind ; expecting the dayspring from on high that shall proclaim peace upon the earth of their souls.

But, watching these in turn, there is also He who feeds *His* flock like a shepherd—*Pastor ovium magnus*, that Great Shepherd of the sheep,—Who, at each

bringing forth in the mystical birth, gathers the lamb in His arms and folds it in His bosom. There is no promise that the path is otherwise than steep or that the process of regeneration is easy, for all birth is a pain. There is no assurance that the travail will not be severe; for all creation groans for the manifestation of those who, by their rebirth, pass out of the files of the "sons of men" into the high order of the "sons of God." But to those in whom Christ is being "formed," and in whom are felt the incipient stirrings of the child that is to be, there are spoken, for their comfort, those tenderest of tender words which promise that, as they come to their birth-bed, "He will gently lead those that are with young."

## II. WITH WHAT BODIES?

We turn now from the psychologic to the metaphysical aspect of the Great Work. Since the raising of the dead involves the opening up, from one's centre, of an orderly sequence of conscious states towards Reality, there remains, in regard to those undertaking that development, the further question, "With what bodies do they come?", with what kind of corporeity are these supra-sensual perceptivities invested when established? since neither in the natural nor the ultra-natural order is consciousness conceivable apart from a vehicle for it. The problem, or rather pseudo-problem, that has bewildered the scientific mind in regard to posthumous survival, how can consciousness exist apart from a body? never arises with St Paul, or any illuminate, for he knows well it does not so exist, and that the subjective always possesses an objective side. Even of the uncreated Essence and formless source of all life this is true. God is indeed Spirit, but the universe, of which but a fraction is sensuously perceptible, is still His vesture; and, analogously, man, a spirit made in the Divine image, is never vestureless although his vesture will needs vary with his state and place of advancement in the Cosmos for the time being. Whilst

physically circumstanced he will be physically clothed; upon quitting that environment he will go to his own place; or rather, since locality is of the mind and not of the non-spatial soul, will find himself standing already clothed appropriately to the conditions in which he is then capable of subsisting. But since the premise of this thesis is that the incident of physical dissolution is outside the scope of our enquiry, which is concerned with considering, as St Paul did, "if by any means we may attain the resurrection of the dead" in this present lifetime, it follows that the expansion of the religious consciousness involves the growth, within the exterior organism yet independently of it, of a vesture appropriate to such of the ultra-physical planes of life as we attain ability to become conscious upon. Though one be in Patmos or in Piccadilly in the mortal body, if at the same time he be so raised from the dead as also to be "in the spirit in the Lord's day," or even in a less exalted state of cognition, he already possesses, in intimate conjunction with his mortal body, another vehicle adapted to that state; one in which he will stand exclusively vested when the physical carapace and its incidental sense-organs become permanently discarded. Hence Jesus, arguing, as ever, from the seen to the unseen, urged, Consider the effortless growth of the lilies of nature; if God so gorgeously colour and clothe natural grass, shall He not much more clothe man with supra-natural "raiment"? (*i.e. rayonnement; doxa; irradiating bodies of glory*); about "putting on" which we need "take no thought" since it will develop automatically with growth in grace, whether we know the fact or not. That the soul becomes *self*-clothed as it advances is covertly and delicately intimated in the statements that, at the Christ-birth, Mary herself, and not the hand of another, "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes"; and that the child grew in a dual way; "in wisdom and stature" —in consciousness and *corporeity*.

We shall not, however, here treat this difficult metaphysical matter upon usual metaphysical lines. Certain assumptions will be made, the detailed demonstration

of which may be found in the works of those whose attainments in supra-sensual consciousness have enabled them to speak authoritatively and to verify the scriptural sanctions to which we shall allude. I refer in particular to the Hermetic and Alchemic texts and the works of Boehme and his disciples in the metaphysical side of mysticism. Of these assumptions the chief is that over against the perishable *matter* of external nature, yet sublying and interpenetrating it, there subsists something Real; *substance* of which a world of imperishable, eternal nature consists; which substance is, there, just as palpable and objective to spiritual perception as physical matter—an excrescence from it—is to physical sense. Between the worlds of external and eternal nature, however—both in the universe and in man, its image in small,—are intermediate phases of creation; notably the astral region, composed of more fluidic, plastic matter than the dense physical world, and therefore in mystical philosophy called “water,” and “the sea.” Plato speaks of it as “the moisture of the lower element”; Moses as “the waters under the earth”; and it is of this the Psalmist writes that “the sea is His, and He made it.” But beyond this is the “dry land,” the *terra firma* of eternity; *dry*, because free from all astral intermixture. This eternal substance, of which “Wisdom hath fashioned her house, and hath hewn out her seven pillars” (Boehme’s Seven Forms of Nature), is that in which the Divine Spirit expresses itself upon its own plane of spirit, as the Divine Mind expresses itself in matter in this lower world. Though the Scriptures have many figures for it, as “house,” and “stone,” it is oftenest spoken of as “land.” It is the mystical Holy Land, or Promised Land; “the land that I will shew thee” to which Abraham was admonished to fly. It is the balmy “land of Gilead” that Moses saw from Pisgah as “over against Jericho,” *i.e.* in antithesis to temporal nature. Isaiah calls it “the land which is very far off,” as indeed it is from sense-perception, though nearer than hands and feet. In the decalogue it is “the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,” in which our

“days shall be long,” for those who inherit it are beyond all sense of time. Of it the Psalmist writes, “His hands prepare the dry land”; and, gently and gradually, they prepare it in *us*, until, as we shall see, it becomes the resurrection-flesh that clothes the perfected human spirit.

The metaphysics of mystical religion, then, involve our belief in a method of supra-sensual bodily growth analogous to that of our physical bodies. There is ever correspondence between the processes obtaining upon the seen and unseen planes of life. That which is below and material is as that which is above and spiritually substantial; the *Fiat* operative in heaven penetrates to, and is done after a corresponding manner in, earth. The embryology of our mortal husks is a faithful shadow of that of our spiritual bodies, and “as we bear the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” As from a nucleole in the womb’s secrecy there develop flesh, nerves, ligaments, and bones until an organism is produced adapted to physical life, which then comes to birth and grows to maturity, so, in the soul’s hiddenness, an organism with like properties, but adapted to ultra-physical planes, can be conceived and grow within us until the mystical truth is fulfilled that “unto us a child is born.” “There are bodies terrestrial,” of impermanent material; “and bodies celestial” of eternal substance; and the formation of the latter is as subtle and gradual as that of the former. Save in the sense of being without *physical* vesture, “disembodied spirits” do not exist, for every spirit has a body upon its own plane. It was doubtless to neutralise the supposition that “a spirit” can exist without corporeity that the apostles were bidden to touch the Lord’s risen form. “Handle me and see; a spirit hath not bones and flesh as ye see Me have.” Were other evidence wanting, those words suffice to indicate that the mystical life is to be recognised as having an objective and metaphysical, as well as a subjective, psychological aspect.

Further, it may be assumed that as the interior spiritual body grows in stature, as it attains consistency

and durability, it reacts upon the physical sheath within which it has become engendered, repolarising its tissues and eventually tending wholly to transmute its corruptible matter and to assimilate and incorporate it into the ultra-physical substance. The "grain of mustard-seed," the nucleole of spirit-substance latent in us, may be encouraged to grow, and burn its way through, as mustard does, until "it fills our whole earth." As we saw in the former part of this paper, the early stages of spiritual growth involve a transmutation of the sensual affections and of the mental and emotional nature, which become raised to a higher power, a new quality, a larger capacity. But why should the transformation stop at that point, or be so arrested as to exclude the actual body of mortality from its beneficent influence? On the contrary, interior growth is notoriously attended with striking changes in external characteristics. Of many of the saints and mystics we are credibly assured, as of St Columba and Ruysbroeck, that their persons became highly radiant and at times illuminated large spaces with their effulgence. Their energy and capacity for work became enormous. At their laying on of hands vitality, both physical and spiritual, streamed from them; even their garments and posthumous relics transmitting a magnetic, healing virtue. Baseness in others became self-revealed at the glance of their eye or by their mere presence. Like Stephen's, their faces "shone as it were the face of an angel." Their bodies counteracted gravitation, and grew diaphanous through the consuming ardour of some beneficent corrosive within, that purged their physical dross and etherealised their persons. When their poor frames were eventually put off, they were often found immune from corruption for extraordinary periods, so strongly tintured had they been by the preservative action of the gracious influence that once had impregnated them. Five years after death Ruysbroeck's body bore no sign of mortality and exhaled an odour of exquisite sweetness;<sup>1</sup> a fact also observed of Walt Whitman in his lifetime. The "odour of

<sup>1</sup> The same fact occurred in the case of St Theresa, Suso, and many other saints.

sanctity" is no mere figure, and, *pace* our puritans, the use of flowers and incense in sanctuaries of religion stands for a great truth. "The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." The man of unregenerate nature—"the field" which is under the curse,—is otherwise distinctified.

It needs, then, only to assume this revitalising process extended to its full and unarrested term to perceive that the entire outward body may become assimilated with and absorbed by this arch-natural transformative agent, this *Salutaris Hostia*; and that any in whom that process was perfected might pass beyond these voices without tasting of physical death. There are biblical intimations of such a supreme achievement. In Enoch it is recorded that spirituality so developed that the time came when he "was not"; the outward form underwent a change resulting in its translation from the plane of sense to that of the supra-sensual. In Elijah the physical nature became transformed into a spiritual vehicle or "chariot of fire," in which, untouched by death, he too passed into the unapparent. And of Moses no man knoweth the place of his "sepulchre" (his physical body), which passed from ordinary ken to a condition which, though exalted, fell short of the supreme possibility. He attained a certain development whence "the land of Gilead" could be seen, but not being ripe to "go over thither," his transition was to an intermediate plane not beyond the conflicting claims of good and evil, for Michael and Satan "disputed about his body."

But the Gospels contain the chief and most explicit of the intimations concerning the elaboration of the arch-natural body. These indicate that, as the Lord's humanity moved towards its temporal close, increasing spirituality of consciousness was accompanied by a concurrent growth of supra-physical form. The natural vesture became gradually dissolved into substance of transcendental quality. "He was transfigured before them." "His raiment (irradiation) became white and dazzling." The physical sight of His companions, "heavy with sleep," failed to observe the subtle change;

to that He remained "Jesus only," the ordinary man amongst men. But, "when they were awake," when the deeper vision of some of them became opened, the body of mortality was seen to be, not destroyed, but engulfed within a "glistening" body of immortality of which they were bidden to tell no man "till Christ be risen" in him, for these mysteries are not for the incredulous crowd. Such were the potencies of this arch-natural body that they are represented as having absorbed and withdrawn into hiddenness from natural eyes the slain, entombed, human form, which indeed became subject to the last of human frailties, that even in this respect the Lord might be even as we. Yet, even so, those powers are shown as only gradually attaining perfection and stability. The impulsive hand of the amazed Mary who first saw that tenuous form was forbidden to touch it; it had not yet attained the requisite fixity and solidarity. A period still needed to be spent amid outward nature, that matrix of all spiritual formation, before the Great Work was concluded. Before the "ascension," forty days went to the testing of this *soma pneumatikon*, as forty had gone to the "temptation" or testing of the *soma psukikon* in "the wilderness." The period was one of alternation between the visible and invisible spheres; of going in and coming out; one in which the paramountcy of the arch-natural body over the physical shell now incorporated into it was demonstrated by the repeated spatial projection and withdrawal of the latter at will; by the passing into, and from, closed premises without recourse to normal methods; and by the consumption of physical food; until the time came when it could be, and was directed to be, touched by those who saw it.

Origen, who received the tradition from very early hands, relates that during this period the appearance of the Lord's person when projected into visibility varied in ratio with the spirituality of the observer. His intimates beheld a figure of extraordinary and increasing radiance where vulgar perception saw but a normal man. Towards the end, as the transmutative process advanced and the physical nature became more and more consumed by the ultra-physical, the common eye saw Him

not all at, and eventually only the more progressed of His followers could detect His presence. At the last, the straining vision of but three of these could perceive Him, and then, out of their sight too, "a cloud"—of angels—received Him.

Such was the prototypal consummation of the Great Work; the precedent that exhibits human capacity carried to its fullest term. Coming now to the recorded efforts of lesser men to attain, or at least to promote, this *anastasis*, the building up in the present life of a resurrection-body has been variously described and taught. It is the *Raja Yoga* of the Vedantists, the royal art of self-reintegration. The Greeks taught the doctrine of evolving the radiant body as the quest of the "golden fleece." In the messages from the withdrawn community for which Eckartshausen is the spokesman, it is described also as the Royal Science; "the task of demolishing this miserable Adamic hut and erecting in its place a divine temple." It is the idea governing the symbolic craft of Masonry; the "building a super-structure perfect in all its parts and honorable to the builder"; in an old Masonic text it is referred to as "building castles in the air"; ethereal fortresses for our eternal habitation. As to the metaphysical material of which these structures are to be reared the Hermetic and Alchemic schools adopt the mystical terms of Scripture and call it a "stone," the "stone of the philosophers," that being a ready type of the most durable of all things; that stone which, in symbol, every Moslem aspires to visit at Mecca; that stone upon which, during the soul's sleep, we all, Jacob-like, pillow our heads, but, upon awaking to our true selves, find to be the "House"—the very residence—of God, and that we "knew it not" although it was always at our hand. It is the "white stone" given "to him that overcometh" the lower nature, and who, by such overcoming, realises the Christ-state, as that apostle did who thereupon received the name that implies "a stone"; for it is only then that the individual becomes a foundation, a "rock," upon which may be built a "church," a personal sanctuary of the Spirit whose abode is the souls

of men rather than ecclesiastical organisations and temples made with hands. The teaching of Boehme and the Alchemists demonstrates how this stone must be "confected," worked up in the individual by a "manual art" (though this need not be read literally) from chaos to perfection, just as it is said of the Creator that "*His hands prepare the dry land.*" They describe the work as undergoing three stages, the black, the white, and the red. The first is the stage of experiencing interior chaos and putrescence; the second, that of achieving precision of form and purity; the third and most difficult of attainment, that wherein the limpid soul experiences the "first miracle" of the inward Christ and

"The conscious waters see their Lord and blush";

its very vesture becoming incarnadined. Thus as, psychologically, regeneration involves the three traditional stages of purgation, illumination, and union, so, metaphysically, there are three corresponding stages of corporeal development. To each of these may be added a fourth, though unlikely of achievement in this present life; the attainment of divine union in permanence, which during physical life can only be temporary and partial; and the corresponding perfecting and consolidation of the arch-natural vesture as exemplified by the risen body of the Master, Jesus.

My purpose, however, is not to restate the metaphysics of the mystical life upon lines already detailed in its abundant literature, but rather to corroborate them by reference to the Pauline doctrine, and, further, to show how they have received expression in the symbolism of the Christian Church.

We will again remind ourselves of the importance attached by St Paul to the present life as the acceptable time and place for commencing the work of self-transmutation. The Psalmist urges a similar monition; "for this shall all that are godly pray in a time when Thou mayest be found, for in the great waterfloods they shall not come nigh Thee"; the implication being that the perfecting of the spiritual life and the formation of its celestial vehicle may prove less easy of achievement in

"the waterfloods"—the great region of astral matter into which are received the majority of souls that pass from this world—than here where a strenuous effort in more constricted conditions has been providentially prescribed for advancing the end in view. Man, first created upon the tree or cross of life, is to be re-created *here*, upon the cross of passion and death, the tree of knowledge of mixed good and evil, which this world is. His re-creation involves not only the salvage of his *soul* but the reconstruction of the fallen temple of his *body*; the assumption into the Creator of the whole "field" of nature in which souls are sown for growth as seeds in a garden. The vineyard is the Lord's no less than the grapes that spring from its soil; and the redemptive process is but partial and incomplete if, in quitting this world, man leaves his vineyard behind him—the legacy of a derelict body. And though to do otherwise seems now impossible, the examples to the contrary cited above—and the Bible does not perpetuate them in vain—indicate what may yet become generally feasible as spirituality increases with the ages. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed" is, not only the torpor of the soul, but also the crowning impotence of physical death. The Lord will eventually save both "man" and "beast"; transmuting both our mental and bestial parts.

The physical nature, then, must be accounted an integral factor in the "work" and be dedicated and employed accordingly. It is the vessel or crucible in which the alchemic change is wrought. Therefore, "that our days may be long in the land"—the vesture of eternal nature—that is eventually given us, we are enjoined to begin by honouring our father and mother. The popular reading of these words leads of course to absurd conclusions; one's place of residence and term of natural life have neither a causal nor a logical dependence upon the measure of filial devotion to one's parents. But the words become luminous upon realising the value of the biblical philosophic terms. "Father" means the rational, ultra-physical part of us which at our birth enters into union with physical matter; "the desiring will to manifestation," Boehme defines it; the impetus

that brings the questing soul into physical life, gives it the "will to live" and yet the longing for life of a nobler order. "Mother" is physical matter itself; "mother nature"; the impersonal matrix into which our "father" or ultra-physical part enters at birth; which that "father" ought to control (for "the wife must always be obedient unto her husband") and so fecundate that by their union there may be generated the spiritual birth, the "child" whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, and upon whose shoulder will be the government of our lives when He is born in us. Moses doubtless transcribed this commandment from the Brahmanic *Institutes of Manu* (the Vedic divine Legislator whose name reappears in Manoah, or Noah, and Im-manu-el) where it runs thus:—"By reverencing his mother (the physical nature) one gains mastery of this world; by reverencing his father (the rational and psychical nature), the intermediate world; and by constant attention to his inward teacher (the *Guru*, or Christ within) the world of Brahma." Although "in sin (imperfection) hath my mother (nature) conceived me" we are to respect her but not to suffer our spirituality to be dominated by her; wherefore the Lord said "Woman, what have *I* (the spiritual Ego) to do with thee?"

All parts of the personality, then, are to be dedicated to the "work," that the whole manhood may be taken into God. If there be need of abundant self-mortification, of "a whole burnt sacrifice," there is none for an asceticism that contemns or even mutilates the physical form. "I beseech you, present your bodies (physical and psychic parts) a living sacrifice, holy (whole and sound as well as sanctified), which is your reasonable service." The regimen enjoined is "the renewing of your mind," not the maceration of the body; for, in a deeper than the familiar sense, *corpus sanum* will ensue surely enough upon *mens sana*.

Think well. Do-well will follow thought...  
 But curb the beast would cast thee in the mire,  
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptuousness,  
 A-cloud between the Nameless and thyself;  
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel  
 And climb the Mount of Blessing?

Each victory over the lower nature liberates a faculty in the higher; and every advance in mystical consciousness is attended by a corresponding inner-body growth of very subtle matter. For "every seed hath its own body" to begin with, however rudimentary it be. Not a child of Adam but in whom the burning "mustard-seed," "kingdom," or spark of eternal life, has been planted; and "God giveth it a body as it pleaseth Him." But that pleasure is not capricious or variable; that body is not built up otherwise than conformably with definite law and order, and in true correspondence with physical bodies, the growth of which, we know, is by a systematic process of cell-extension. Our task lies in encouraging that seed to grow till it emerges into our consciousness. Its "flesh" will develop simultaneously with itself; and in that flesh we may consciously function during physical life, though independently of it; "in (according to) my flesh shall I see God"; and as we develop it here so shall we stand clothed upon "when worms destroy this body" of mortality and we pass from physical conditions for ever.

Now of this "flesh" St Paul declares there are four well-defined phases. "There is one flesh of men; another of beasts; another of fishes; another of birds."<sup>1</sup> Here again is one of those passages where the literalist stumbles and the blind fall into a ditch. They might refer to a treatise, *De Resurrectione Carnis*, in which Tertullian indicates the allusion to the occult and transcendental which St Paul here makes in terms of the natural; or they might gather light from Plato who, whilst guardedly declaring many esoteric truths common to the catholic mysteries of all ages, speaks openly enough to proclaim his fellowship with St Paul and other biblical writers in mystical experience and knowledge. But better still would it be were they to look through the letter which killeth, to the spirit which giveth life to these words, and read them with something of that wisdom which enabled Solomon to expound, among other things, the symbolic value of trees "from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop growing out of the wall" and to "speak of

<sup>1</sup> Plato uses the same categories in the *Timaeus*.

beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes" in the occult sense with which alone the Scriptures and St Paul are concerned.

St Paul is speaking in the terms of the traditional esoteric wisdom which is the common background of all the great religions. His categories of "flesh" are four because severally related to the four differentiated but interpenetrating planes into which creation, and therefore man, is divided, and defined as earth, water, air, and fire. That place, or condition of consciousness (the terms are interchangeable) in which matter is densest and most prepotent over spirit is called earth; a term not exclusive to the objectively physical world, for there are conditions in which life may still be heavily earth-bound although physically discarnate. The next, where matter is still prepotent, but is of a less dense, more fluidic order, is that of water; "the moisture of the inferior element"; "the waters under the earth"; or, in modern terms, the astral. But above this is the spiritual region of air, where spirituality asserts itself over materiality; hence "the Lord (the spiritual Ego) dwelleth above the waterfloods," and Christ "walks upon" the "sea." It is the Platonic "world of ideas"; the mental plane; that of the higher *manas* of the Vedantists. Lastly, above all, is the supreme region of fire; *flammania mænia mundi*; the empyrean whose spirit-substance is the holy element of eternal nature; the interior garment of God; that fire of which Ruysbroeck wrote that here "one is no longer conscious of himself except as an immense conflagration sensible of its own heat."

As it successively attains these four states the soul wears appropriate clothing. That upon the lowest is the "flesh of beasts" (the Hebrew *Nephesh*), for, whether the physical husk or the etheric wraith, it is destined, unless transmuted, to disintegration, and is therefore elsewhere called "the beasts that perish."

Upon the plane of water, where consciousness is limited to the astral order, the flesh is that of "fishes." Now, like its physical counterpart, the ocean, the astral "sea" has its turbid, weedy bottom, and its clear water

at the surface where it meets with the spiritual region of air. According to those who "move in the great waters" and "go down to this sea in ships" (bodies<sup>1</sup>) may be one of two kinds; they may be spiritually impervious, blind, unclean, resembling crustaceans, sightless deep-sea fish, or scavengers of the ocean, all which were therefore classified in the Mosaic law as unclean and unfit for food, for obvious symbolic reasons; or they may be as "those with fins and scales" by which "clean fish" under the Mosaic law rise to the surface-waters where the higher, airy order of life begins and the rays of the sun penetrate; fins and scales being, both morphologically and mystically, the rudimentary antecedents of the wings and feathers worn by creatures of the air. Deep and undiscerned significance lies in the fact that many of the apostles were fishermen; they plied that outward trade that interiorly they might become "fishers of men" (*Manas*; *Nous*; spiritual mind, or manna). Why did Peter gird on his "fisher's coat" and go forth from his "ship" to meet Him whom he saw "walking upon the waters"? That fisher's coat was the astral body, as distinguished from his "coat of skin," "ship," or animal body. "For he was naked"; as Adam and Eve "were naked" after the primal sin; divested of the wedding-garment of the holy, paradisal element in which alone the divine union is to be regained. The Greeks taught the same parable in the legend of Icarus, who also essayed to soar to the spiritual Sun, but, like Peter, fell back into the "sea"; for it is of this arduous flight to the heights of consciousness that Isaiah says that "the young men," the novices in the spiritual life, "shall utterly fall"; but that those that persevere and "wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" and "mount up like eagles."

The "flesh of birds" is that of those who can so transcend the unstable region of the astral, and consciously rise into the airy or spiritual plane to which all religions allocate the angels, and to which the winged sphinxes of Egypt and winged bulls of Assyria were meant to testify that human consciousness may soar.

<sup>1</sup> The body of a church is called the *nave*, or ship (*navis*).

Frequently the Alchemists write of "sending up their bird," and of their experiences in the "liberty of the spirit." The soul, says Plato in the great *Phædrus* allegory, was originally feathered, but by descending into matter it has broken its wings and trails them in the mire of this world; though it may regain them by knowledge, discipline, and aspiration. So also David; "though ye have lien among the pots, ye shall have the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers of gold." The gradual regaining of its power of flight is wonderfully figured in Noah's sending birds forth from the Ark over the "waters." At first he sent out the *black raven* "which went forth to and fro"; the dark, unillumined intellect oscillating between the "pairs of opposites" that bound all merely intellectual experience, and unable to do more than return upon itself. Yet even so the tentative Godward searching of our immature, unenlightened thought does not return to us void. "He feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him"; and to every famished and unclad Elijah "ravens" bring "bread and flesh," the very activity of our intellectual processes feeding the soul and building subtle material into its invisible body. Then went forth the *white dove*, the purified spiritual aspiration. This at first came back with a leaf pluckt off from that Mount of Olives which furnishes the Good Samaritan's oil, bringing the foretaste of Paradise. Eventually it returned no more. The waters of the astral reason had abated; it had found the "dry land," our ark's high resting-place in God, the Mountains of Ararat—the abode of the Arhats (literally the "crowned heads") or Adepts of the Vedas; the "just men made perfect" of the Bible.

Whoso with his soul's eyes has ever beheld the glittering sylph-bodies of the "birds" of Paradise knows the truth of the biblical description of these human habitations of the Most High; "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!" Like Plato, Dante, and many another, the Psalmist had been in company with these "shining celestial forms," and had learned how one "day" in those courts—one flash

of the spiritual consciousness—is better than a thousand sense impressions or intellectual apprehensions. Like them, recalling the delirium of that moment, he yearned for its renewal; for "the wings of a dove," to carry him for ever to that rest which is the stillness of infinite motion in the life and love of God. With what modesty he likens himself to the humblest of birds; "I am as a sparrow on the housetop!" His fledgling soul had soared to the summit of the Father's many-mansioned House. With what delicacy and richness of imagery he again sings of himself, "The sparrow hath built her a house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; even Thy high places!" For him the time of the singing of "birds" had come and the voice of the turtle had been heard in "the land." His soul had come out of "great waters" and, in the free air of the spirit, had listened to the choirs upon the eternal shore.

Of the last of the orders of "flesh," that of "men" in the supreme region of fire, it is written that "the form of the fourth was as a son of God." It is that of those whom Daniel calls "royal children, without blemish, having ability to stand in the King's palace." The "flesh of birds" is indeed fair, and their condition joyous as the familiar hymn,

Happy birds, that sing and fly  
Round Thy altars, Lord most High!

but birds are frail and fugitive, and, as David found, not beyond "the snare of the fowler," for the serpent has access to Eden still. "Lovely tabernacles," but tabernacles (*i.e.* tents) imply light, temporary shelters, that moreover may be blown down, rather than a substantial, permanent residence. There remains, then, the final citadel, the "King's palace," inaccessible to "the prince of the power of the air." Hence David says that at the end of his journey "I will dwell in the *House* of the Lord for ever"; and St John, "He shall become a pillar in the *House* of God, and go no more out"; and St Paul, "We have an *House* not made with hands, eternal and in the heavens."

The biblical "men," says Philo, are not the common mortals, but real Men, Masters; "the pure, thoroughly sifted race which alone is the really rational one"; endowed with what is variously called *Manas*, *Nous*, the spiritual mentality which is far above the rationalising intellect. And having, like the Christian Master, at last transmuted and indrawn their lower vehicles, they are "perfect in their (re)generation," fulfilling the primal creative fiat, "Let them have dominion over the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air," in the sense of having attained complete mastery over their more elementary bodies and gained the ability to function upon every plane of life at will. They are those super-men referred to in a great aspiration in the Latin liturgy; *Ad societatem civium supernorum perducat nos Rex Angelorum!*

What was seen in the furnace of the King of Babylon typified the evolving *anastasis* or resurrection-form; the elaboration of the soul's corporeity through the purifying fires of experience; which fires are the projection into this outer world of the fire of the King of Heaven's love for man. Therefore "let Ananias, Azarias, and Misael bless the Lord!" For Ananias is ourselves in respect of our earthly, deceptive reason, which lies to us, robs us of our true inheritance, inhibits the spiritual light, and "keeps back part of the price of the land." Yet that "earth" is the Lord's and "the fulness"—the latent capacities—thereof, and its evil may be changed to good. Misael too is ourselves when our refractory earthiness has been dissolved in water and its robe washed white. But, like the names Moses and Messias, Misael means "divinely drawn from the water"; and the sea being His, for He made it, will also give up its dead; and thus finally "the dry land" emerges as the astral waters abate; in other words, the "fulness" of our "earth" appears in us, cleansed and transfigured, as Azarias; which in Egyptian was Osiris, and in Hebrew is also Eleazar, whence Lazarus—"the risen from the tomb."

Because of their new rising St John writes of the perfected that they are given "the morning-star."

For they become the stars of the celestial firmament, whose controlling centre is the Sun of Righteousness and whose eternal nature is reflected in the Moon of Divine Wisdom. There is, adds St Paul, one glory, or radiance, of that Sun; another glory of that Moon; another glory of those Stars; and one Star differs from another in glory as, in this inferior world, individuals differ in features and characteristics. But of them it is so written because their rising is out of all nations, languages, and creeds of this world; but, reaching their zenith in the reconciling heaven of heavens, they tell one tale and use but a single voice. Around the central Light of Lights "the morning-stars sing together."

The growth of the arch-natural body through these four stages is further exhibited in the symbolic, ceremonial vestments of the Christian priest. These were originally so designed as to corroborate through the eye the truths taught through the ear, so that those whose aspiration is to become priests unto God might have ocular example of the way in which they must themselves become interiorly clothed. Under the Mosaic law the priestly garments abounded in the profoundest symbolism, since they were to "serve unto an example and shadow of heavenly things, being made after the pattern shown to Moses in the mount" of spiritual perception. As assuredly those ordained for catholic usage at the time religious forms underwent re-expression in Christian terms were made for a like example and from patterns seen in the same mount, and those examples still survive in the Roman Church whose unfailing instinct in this respect has prohibited any deviation from the original forms. Elsewhere the sense of symbolism disappeared with the decay of imagination in religion and art; its value has been despised or disregarded since reformers and the secular government assumed the ordering of ceremonial into their own incompetent hands, tinkering or casting away means of grace invested both with high educative value and deeper advantages that they recked not of.

Time was when there was "open vision" in Christen-

dom; when the *Vates* or spiritual seers to whose college is due the name of the Vatican Hill (*quantum mutatus ab illo!*) foregathered upon that other "mount" of which that hill was to be the visible type, and received from the plane of Reality the things they reproduced in this world of *simulacra*,—the great sacramental rites; the verbal *formulae* transmissive of grace and power; the effectual times and seasons for divine offices; the clothing and the colours and perfumes; and all means that should conform the worship of God in this world with His adoration in the unseen, and, by wisely appointed devices and subtle magical links, so effectually harmonise the outer with the inner Church that the hearts of both might always throb as one. However, although the poor wisdom of this world rejects them, *Deus non ligatur sacramentis suis*,—access to God is not restricted to sacramental forms even of his own appointing. But, even in avoiding their abuse, we ignore them at our cost. Having them not, there may be taken away even that which we have, as seems to be becoming true in the churches of to-day. To such testimonies, then, it is well to turn and consider what has been purposefully designed for our instruction. They are part of the "wherewithal" with which "a young man"—any spiritual neophyte—may "cleanse his way" and mark his progress, as he sets out upon the path, saying, "I look for the resurrection of the dead."

The priest, vesting himself in the prescribed habiliments, symbolically assumes those ultra-physical ones that successively evolve from and clothe the soul on its progress towards God. The first of these is the cassock; the first of the "bodies terrestrial." This is black, and of wool; material of comparatively gross texture. It is black, to typify the benighted mind and unclarified state of the soul's vesture at the outset of the Great Work; the alchemical stone at the black. It is of wool, to proclaim its bestial nature; the "flesh of beasts," or unregenerated *Nephesh*. But, by the Mosaic law, the animal whence wool comes is of the clean class; "meat that may be eaten"—eventually

by God. It is from a sheep, and from a sheep may be born a lamb of which one day it may be said, *Ecce agnus Dei!* A great metamorphosis is needed for the black sheep of God's fold ere they become fit food for Him.

Therefore over the black garment of wool is thrown the alb, or white surplice, of the "fair linen which is the righteousness of saints"; the second of the "bodies terrestrial," and the "stone at the white." Thus a coarse animal vesture gives way to a tenuous one of vegetable fibre; earth has been baptised with, and changed to, water—the chief element of vegetal, as solid food is of animal, growth. Since corruption cannot inherit incorruption, nor flesh and blood enter the Kingdom, nothing animal or sensual must be found at this stage; not even, says Moses, "woollen and linen mingled"; every particle of animality being eliminated. Thus are the clouded mind and the soul's black vesture of "earth"—not destroyed, but transmuted by the thereout-growing envelope of "water"; just as the cassock is—not discarded, but put into hiddenness by the alb.

Then follows the first of the "bodies celestial." He who passes from the chancel of a church—where the alb is the appropriate vestment, as the cassock is in the nave—into the sanctuary or place of communion, is as he whose purified soul enters the experience of the divine union and learns the mystery of the wedding-feast where the soul's waters are rubified into wine and it attains the "stone at the red." Every David is interiorly "ruddy and of a fair countenance"; for all flesh reddens when healthy; all fruit, as it ripens in the sun. Even the white petals of the golden-hearted daisy flush to crimson at their tips. Therefore over the alb is assumed the red cope of silk embroidered with gold; the *cappa magna* that enswathes the wearer like that which it typifies, the purple robe of Christ; the burning love of God. It is of silk, for that most ethereal of materials issues from creatures whose element is air; typifying, therefore, the self-generated nature of the "lovely tabernacles" worn upon the plane of air, or

spirit. It is adorned with precious metal, for the soul grown to the stature of "the King's daughter" is "all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold"; wrought, since gold indicates the holy ultimate substance, which, though always latent in us, like gold-dust in common soil, needs mining, refining, and working up by skilful craftsmanship before becoming a jewel for the King's treasury.

Lastly, the "gold must be tried in fire"; the growing celestial body must be perfected and fixated until capable of eternal endurance in the burning heat of the Divine *penetralia*. As previously said, this perfecting is scarcely to be looked for in this present life, but its achievement, as the state attained by those who become "kings and priests unto God," is symbolically attested by the robes of universal scarlet worn by those called to corresponding rank in the outer Church; the prince-prelates of the Sacred College of Cardinals. These typify those "who have ability to stand in the King's palace"; their whole raiment of flaming red, "their coats, their hosen, and their hats," suggesting that their wearers can subsist, unseared, in the central furnace of Divine Love. And just as these exemplars in the outer Church encircle one chosen from among them as having, like themselves, worked upwards through every phase of the Christian life and at last become Holy Father of them all, so those in the interior Church whom they foreshadow stand around Him who "in all things became like unto ourselves"; the Great High Priest, *Pontifex Maximus*—the supreme *Bridge-builder* who spans the gulf between man and God.

"Earth to earth," we say when mortality is lowered to the grave; but "earth to earth" is also true when our corruptible puts on incorruption and is "raised in glory," becoming the adamantine substance of eternity; that celestial "red earth" which the name Adam implies and the robes of the Cardinals exemplify. Hermetic writers often speak of it as "Damascene earth" or "earth of Damascus" (an abridgment of Damascus). In the symbolic geography of the Scriptures (a subject that cannot here be developed) the city at

the extreme north of Palestine was ever the type of the spiritual heights, the state of the "second Adam." A journey thither from the south was thus a figure of the soul's ascent from the "first Adam" state—the "city Adam," which was one of the "cities of the plain." The inner sense of the outward fact of Saul of Tarsus "coming near Damascus" when his great transformative experience overtook him is therefore that, like many others, he was unwittingly upon the path of the Great Quest, but employing misguided methods, when his eyes were suddenly opened. Those who know the Rosicrucian legend will recall how, and perceive why, Christian Rosy-Cross journeyed to the same city and thereby learned to build his "House of the Holy Spirit"; his resurrection-body.

Our thought has reached high ground, but I have laboured to be lucid in speaking of things exacting unwonted claims upon the normal understanding and that, though the subject of an abundant literature, have ever been expressed in terms of great restraint and concealment, as if the writers felt still bound by the injunction, "Tell the vision to no man till Christ be risen." But "now is Christ risen" in many to-day, and at least something of the vision may be told. The understanding of these things will be assisted by realising physical things to be in faithful correspondence with metaphysical, and that, as we advance from the one to the other, we employ in turn the self-blinded eye of sense, the closed eye of faith, and the opened eye of the soul. At the beginning of the Quest, as of Scripture, the sensual man, like Abraham, is conscious only of things of the physical order. Let him commit himself, with bandaged eyes, to his instinct in the possibility of a great self-transfiguration, believing that "My covenant is with your flesh," and at the end of it, as with John, the spiritual seer, the hoodwink is removed and faith passes into sight. His eyes see the salvation prepared before the face of all people, but hidden from them by a passing blindness, and he can testify that in very deed "the tabernacle of God is with men," and not elsewhere.

He sees how the first "heaven" and the first "earth"—the natural consciousness and its temporary vesture—vanish in the course of a great reintegrating enterprise, and how in their place, and out of them, emerge a new "heaven" and a new "earth"; a spiritual mind and an arch-natural body, which, "coming down from God out of heaven," constitute the human organism a "holy city" even in this present world. And he sees how, during the gradual transfiguring of the lower self, there must needs be rent in twain and wither away that great veil of our temple, the astral vesture; the harbourer of all false imagination and desire and the source of the illusive natural reason, that "most subtle of the beasts of the field." As Moses exulted at passing the "Red Sea"; as David in the hymn of his regeneration sang "The sea saw and fled!" so, in the hour of his liberation, the great eagle of Patmos exclaims, with a sigh of profound thanksgiving, "And there was no more sea!". No more astral mind with its protean illusions; no more "night" of the soul; no more tossing in agonised thought upon that great deep; no more storms of temper, nor tears, nor heaving of the tempestuous emotions. That sea is His, and He made it, with all its changeful moods, in making us; and those moods serve their cleansing, educative purpose during our unfolding; their "fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy wind fulfilling His word" in us. But at last upon them all "Peace; be still!" becomes perpetually enjoined when That awakes which in every one of us is "asleep in the hinder part of the ship"; and there remain only and ever the "dry land" of our eternal substance and the "still waters" of the crystal soul gleaming in the dazzling rays of the Sun of the soul; and, over all, the infinite, unclouded sky and serene air of the Spirit—that blissful consciousness of which every poet dreams in terms of place and every mystic knows in realised experience,

Where falls not hail, nor rain, nor any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows roughly; but it lies  
Deep-bowered, happy;

beyond the paralysing touch of pain; beyond every deadening intervention from the source of life; for, in that regeneration, behold! all things are made new.

"Jordan was *driven back.*" In those meaningful words the discerning will find the key to the Great Work. By being introverted and sublimated, all the frittered energies that, like the river of Canaan, run to waste in the "Dead Sea" of unregenerate life can be forced back and made to contribute to the formation of the substantial "immortality" we are destined to put on over this mortal. To that end the riddle is offered for our reflection, "Out of the strong comes sweetness."<sup>1</sup> From the soul's fetters may the soul gather strength for itself. Therefore Samson "took honey out of the carcase of the lion"<sup>2</sup>; chastely conserving and assimilating the quintessence of his own ravening mortal nature. Therefore the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord in himself by nourishing his interior growth with the same "wild honey," and by suffering the rank vegetation of the natural mind to be consumed by "locusts"; *i.e.* the swarming spiritual incursions that descend upon the consciousness of every lonely contemplative; coming, like locusts, one knows not whence, but coming, as He ever comes, with "clouds"—even with legions of angels. And therefore, fulfilling these scriptures, that other strong one, the Lord Jesus, in His resurrection form, "ate of an honeycomb" from His disciples' hands, symbolically teaching that the cellular physical organism (figured by the ministering disciples) must yield up its virtue towards the fabrication of the arch-natural body. He partook also of "broiled fish"; for the "flesh of fishes" must also be saved, "yet so as by fire," and so be made an ingredient of that body. A "whole burnt sacrifice," an immolation of the entire lower nature, is called for before the spiritual mind can come into full play or the spiritual body be effectually built up. As Isaac carried up the mountain the faggots upon which he was himself to be offered, so, as we too ascend, we carry in ourselves the fuel for our own cleansing fire. The renunciation

<sup>1</sup> Judges xiv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Judges xiv. 8-9.

of the claims of the senses is comparatively easy; the surrender of the mind, especially when that mind is already partly illuminated, is more difficult of both apprehension and achievement. Every "fisher of men" (*i.e.* of spiritual mentality) knows what may be netted in the "sea" of his mind; a harvest at times so abundant that he is "not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes"; the natural mind failing to contain the spiritual inrush that descends upon it. For that very reason a renunciation of that mind and its content is needful. *There must be no net;* no mental limitation to our apprehension of Reality; rather must It catch and possess us. The Great Fish must swallow us, as it did Jonah. The Great Bird must be suffered to carry us off, as Jove's eagle did Ganymede, so that—*sub umbra alarum Tuarum, Jehova!*—we may be gathered as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing. Such is the implicit of the profound and pregnant glyph with which St John concludes his Gospel. Certain disciples had exploited the waters of the natural mentality and caught much fish therein. At last they neared the goal of all desire; "they were not far from land." But, from the point where land and water met, there confronted them "a fire of coals and *fish laid thereon—and bread*"; and, standing by, the Resurrection and the Life, saying, Come and dine! A final burnt sacrifice was asked. They were to make the sacrifice of "broiled fish," before standing upon "dry land" and tasting the last of luxuries, the Bread of Life.

"And bread." First He feeds us, in our rational part, with rough bread and flesh, as He did the naked, starved Elijah. But, ere we pass on, He asks for a return of that flesh in burnt offering; and making it, we perceive, with Isaac, that we sacrifice only our baser nature and the captious intellect whose horns have become "caught in the thicket" of unilluminated reason. He feeds us next, in our higher mental and emotional parts, with the lesser mysteries of bread and fish; but it is still the coarser fare, "*barley loaves and small fishes.*" And, again checking our progress, He stands by a brazier, pointing to "fish laid thereon,"

and asks with thrice-reiterated earnestness if we prefer the gifts to the Giver; "Lovest thou Me—more than these?" And, lastly, when the tardy answer comes, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!" He feeds us in the "upper room" of our spiritual consciousness, with the greater mysteries of bread of wheat, and wine; and these are Himself. First the breaking of the soul's fast; then the dinner in the wilderness, the sustaining midday meal during the activity of the quest; finally "the last supper," at the senses' quiet nightfall, ere we enter into the rest that remaineth. And, accordingly as we eat, "out of the eater comes forth meat"<sup>1</sup>; the soul develops flesh and grows by what it feeds on.

Ever bread; though no sacrifice of that is asked in return; for He is Himself that bread and the sacrifice. Ever bread; for the universal food of natural man is the symbol of that supra-natural food which also is universally, but hiddenly, diffused; "My Body"; the "stone" which is nature's ultimate and indestructible substrate; the cause of all beauty of form and colour, sound and scent; *omne delectamentum in se habens* (as Aquinas said of it), comprising every conceivable delight within itself; the basis of all natural life and forces, whose imperfect aggregations arrest some gleam of its iridescence, "parting My garment among them," and flashing forth its "many colours" in broken lights. Whoso understandingly receives this "stone" in the symbolic, fragmentated bread of the altar, indeed "holds infinity in the palm of his hand." He discerns in it the Lord's Body, broken for him, and in him; the token of the universal Divine Vesture that is co-extensive with the Divine Spirit, and the pledge of that raiment with which his own spirit will eventually be clothed. By appropriating It, we become It; individually as fragments, collectively as the whole Loaf. Our lives begin as separated grains of wheat slowly ripening in the field of temporal nature. That they may become Bread, an innumerable quantity of these must be brought to a central granary; be winnowed of their individual chaff; be reduced to flour between

<sup>1</sup> Judges xiv. 14.

the millstones of the cosmic life-process, until all selfish sense of separateness has vanished, and all are changed into the white unity of a new substance, made cohesive by a common baptism in the Water of Life, leavened by the afflatus of a common Spirit, and raised to perfect food by the fire of the Holy Love. But food for whom?

As this contemplation closes it is given me to see in another form a truth that already more than once has been adumbrated in the course of it. And because it is so given, and is not a vanity of speculation or self-devising, it may be stated with the same boldness and prefaced by the same words that were his who also once wrote of the raising of the dead and of the bodies with which we shall thereto come.

“Behold I shew you a Mystery!” During our exile from the Father’s House, the Divine Body and Blood, the one-in-twain spirit-substance of all being, have perpetually and manifoldly been ministered to man, that thereby his impoverished nature might be nourished out of death and quickened into abundant life. This debt must be repaid into the King’s treasury; this depletion of the Divine Essence—if in the exigencies of human speech it may so be spoken of what is inexhaustible—must be made good. In the consummation, then, the position will become reversed. The Bread of Divine Life cast upon the waters of our creation will return after many days, and, in the end, it is man who comes bringing, and bringing himself as, gifts of bread and wine to God.

At the last Eucharist of all, when the manifestation of our present poor outward personalities has been furled as a scroll and has passed as a watch in the night; when, bone to its bone and member to its member, the disjointed, broken body of the Lord is brought together from the ends of the earth, and the astral sea gives up the dead that are in it, that the kingdom of perfected spirits may be delivered to the Father and God become all in all, the Great High Priest of our salvation will minister certain holy elements to the awaiting Godhead, into whose faithful and unifying heart they will be received with thanksgiving. The commingled ecstatic

consciousnesses of all that have had life and breath will constitute the cup that even now is called CALIX SANGUINIS MEI; and when, before the King of all, the supreme miracle of the resurrection-body of corporate humanity, into which all our now fragmentated souls shall have become conjoined, is displayed in a last raising of the Host, it will be to the triumphant words, HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM—“For this is My Body.”